

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed October 20, 2004, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration.

Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Daubenspeck et al. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Daubenspeck describes, for example, in Figures 22 and 23, a fuse structure including a capacitive circuit having a capacitance which is alterable. The upper plate of the capacitor corresponds to the penultimate metallization level (2100). On Figure 22, a pair of metal regions of the penultimate metallization level (2100) have facing edges. A dielectric gap (2102) is provided between the two facing edges. The dielectric gap is left in place when it is desired to isolate the facing edges. The dielectric gap is broken down when it is desired to make the two metal regions contact (Col. 7, lines 62-65). Breaking down of the dielectric gap is obtained by applying a specific voltage field through E-Beams or Ion-Beams.

According to the Office Action, insulating portions (2203) are said to cover the facing edges of determined pairs of metal regions according to specific needs. This is incorrect. In Daubenspeck, the insulating layer (2003) always covers the facing edges of the pairs of metal regions (2001). If there are several fuses in one circuit, the insulating layer (2003) will cover the facing edges of all pairs of metal regions and not selected pairs.

Claims 7 recites an integrated circuit adapted to specific needs, comprising a stack of insulating layers, , each layer being associated with a determined metallization level, metal areas of the last metallization level forming electric contacts of the integrated circuit, comprising: pairs of metal regions of the penultimate metallization level having a facing edge and connected to components of the integrated circuit; insulating portions covering the edges of the metal regions of determined pairs according to the specific needs; and metal portions of the last metallization level which cover the facing edges of the metal regions of all pairs and which connect the metal regions of the pairs other than the determined pairs. Clearly, Daubenspeck does not teach or suggest metal portions of the last metallization level which cover the facing edges of the metal regions of all pairs and which connect the metal regions of the pairs other than the determined pairs. Clearly, claim 7 distinguishes over Daubenspeck and is in allowable condition. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 is respectfully requested.

Claim 8 depends from claim 7 and is allowable for at least the same reasons.

Applicant has also added claims 9 and 10 to further define Applicant's contribution to the art.

Claim 9 recites an integrated circuit comprising a stack of insulating layers, each layer being associated with a metallization level, metal areas of an upper most metallization level forming electric contacts of the integrated circuit, comprising: pairs of metal regions of the penultimate metallization level having a facing edge and connected to components of the integrated circuit; insulating portions covering the edges of the metal regions of determined pairs according to the specific needs; and metal portions of the upper most metallization level which cover the facing edges of the metal regions of all pairs and which connect the metal regions of the pairs other than the determined pairs. As discussed above in connection with claim 7, Daubenspeck does not teach or suggest metal portions of the upper most metallization level which cover the facing edges of the metal regions of all pairs and which connect the metal regions of the pairs other than the determined pairs. Accordingly, claim 9 is in allowable condition.

Claim 10 depends from claim 9 and is allowable for at least the same reasons.

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CONCLUSION

A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. The Examiner is requested to call the undersigned at the telephone number listed below if this communication does not place the case in condition for allowance.

If this response is not considered timely filed and if a request for an extension of time is otherwise absent, Applicant hereby requests any necessary extension of time. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 23/2825.

Respectfully submitted,

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